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REVISED PROGRAMME OF WORK AND PRIORITIES FOR 1982-1983 AND 1984-1985

E/ECA/HUS/5

Summary

This document contains a proposal on the revision of the programme of work for consideration by the Intergovernmental Regional Committee.

The activities for the implementation of the regional human settlements policy decided by the Committee have been modified in accordance with the available resources made up of allocations from the regular budget of the Commission and from extra-budgetary resources. However, these extra-budgetary resources are not as substantial as the Committee had expected.

Since the programmes have been drawn up on multi-annual basis, it is absolutely necessary to be assured of a regular source of finance.

The resources drawn from the regular budget are allocated for a budgetary cycle corresponding to the duration of the programmes and in general vary little from one cycle to the other. These resources do not cover the full range of activities of the programme of work.

Additional extra-budgetary resources are therefore, indispensable. Unfortunately these resources are not necessarily granted for the whole period of a cycle and are not always of the same amount.

The rational thing to do in order to ensure continuity of activities during a cycle, therefore, appears to be a reduction in the activities to be undertaken within the framework of the programme of work and priorities adopted by the Committee; consequently there is the need to re-define the priorities.

It should also be recalled that the activities cover technical assistance services to Governments on request, studies on the themes pertaining to the priorities, and experts' meetings or seminars during which these studies are examined so as to define the directions of further actions which are then submitted to the Committee for approval. At the subregional level, the programmes include assistance to Governments and, depending on the decisions of the Committee, studies on sectors of subregional interest selected by the member countries of the subregions.

The new approach envisages a reduction in the number of regional priorities, in accordance with the resources of the regular budget of the Commission. Thus the continuity in the implementation of activities would be better guaranteed. These activities would concentrate on the disciplines which constitute the key areas of a human settlements policy. These studies would centre on specific priority sectors, depending on the nature of the difficulties encountered by the member States in the development of their national policies and on the mode of implementation of the studies.

The resources of the regular budget would be devoted to these activities and technical assistance services to Governments.

These activities would enable the secretariat to furnish the Governments of member States with the subjects for future experts' meetings, on the basis of which they would draw up proposals on follow-up actions for the consideration of the Committee which would take an appropriate decision.

The necessary resources for the organization of these experts' meetings, to be drawn from extra-budgetary sources, should be determined and then mobilized by the Committee.

It should be recalled, at this point, that during discussions on the question of institutional arrangements, the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements adopted the principle of organizing meetings of specialized working groups (see document E/CN.14/HUS/33 "resolution 1(I) institutional arrangements", and the annex to this document).

It is therefore proposed (see document E/ECA/HUS/4 paragraphs 7 and 79) that this decision be implemented through the setting up of technical study committees under the authority of the Committee.

These Technical Study Committees would follow-up the studies undertaken by the secretariat in co-operation with the Governments of the countries. The additional activities to be included in the programme of work, implemented with resources from the regular budget, would be formulated according to the available extra-budgetary resources.

In short, the resources of the regular budget would be used for studies on the priority subjects approved by the Committee. The extra-budgetary resources to be made available by the Committee would be used to carry out these studies.

The regular budget resources would also support the provision of technical assistance services to the Governments.

The extra-budgetary resources to be mobilized would be used not only for the follow-up of the studies in the regional programme but also for specific support activities of the regional or subregional programmes carried out from the regular budget or the implementation of human settlements projects.

Introduction

The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa submits, in this document, a revised version of the programme of work for the periods 1982-1983 and 1984-1985 for the consideration and approval of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements.

At its second meeting held in Addis Ababa from 28 July to 1 August 1980, the Committee considered the programme of work for 1982-1984 and the Medium-Term Plan for 1985-1989, both contained in document E/CN.14/HUS/45.

The proposals contained in that document had been formulated taking into account the objectives for self-reliant and self-sustained development defined in the new African development strategy adopted by the Heads of State and Government in the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos. The secretariat had envisaged that pursuant to these development objectives, those African States which had not yet established institutions and mechanisms for the promotion of human settlements would do so. Governments of member States were also urged to give priority attention to their policy related to the provision of infrastructures in rural areas with a view to achieving modernization of such areas.

In the field of rural development, the secretariat proposed that special attention should be given to the development of river basins. It further proposed that efforts should be directed towards improving the living conditions of the urban population with emphasison the development of systems of popular participation. All these recommendation were adopted by the Committee. Besides, the Committee considered that it was necessary to increase the resources at its disposal for the implementation of its mandate and the secretariat's means for assisting and supporting the efforts of the Governments of member States. The Committee therefore recommended that the resources of the headquarter and subregional offices of the Commission should be strengthened. It also requested the secretariat to initiate pilot projects for studying design and space standards for the planning and construction of community facilities and model residential complexes

The Committee further expressed its grave concern over the problems facing countries which received persons displaced by natural or man-made disasters and requested the secretariat of the Commission to offer assistance to the countries on request to enable them integrate these persons in the economic life of the settlement areas.

Finally, the Committee called upon the secretariat to follow-u and also strengthen the building materials and construction industries development programme.

At the end of its deliberations, the Committee adopted a series of resolutions defining its regional priorities.

These resoltuions were endorsed by the Conference of Ministers of Economic Planning and Development at its seventh meeting held in Freetown from 6 to 10 April 1981; the programme of work and priorities of the Commission for 1981-1982 and 1983-1984 relating to human settlements programmes was formulated on the basis of the foregoing actions. At this point it is worth referring to document E/ECA/HUS/4 which gives an account of the activities carried out by the secretariat in the implementation of these resolutions and explains the difficulties encountered.

In view of these difficulties the secretariat considered it necessary to submit a revised programme of work for consideration by the Committee. This revised programme of work was prepared taking into account the stage reached in the implementation of the programme, the resources provided for in the regular budget of the Commission and all the activities which need to be carried out successfully during the period 1982-1983 and 1983-1984.

This revised programme includes a programme for the evaluation of the situation of human settlements in the region which will be implemented jointly by the ECA secretariat and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). This evaluation will constitute an element of the report on the world situation of human settlements which the Commission on Human Settlements has requested the Centre for Human Settlements to prepare.

Factors underlying the revision of the programme of work and priorities: priorities - Types and levels of action

In order to implement the programme of work and priorities the secretariat must provide simultaneously technical advisory services to the Governments of the countries on request and undertake activities at the regional and subregional levels.

The technical advisory services to be provided to Governments have been incorporated in subregional activities.

The regional programme includes the preparation of reports on the studies which will be carried out on the priority areas. These reports will be sent directly to member States or presented to the Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements. On the basis of these studies it is proposed to organize experts' meetings or seminars.

As stated above, the subregional programme includes the provision of technical assistance services to member States and the implementation of priority actions at the level of the respective subregions.

The resources available at present have not made it possible to maintain the experts in the subregional offices. Consequently these offices are not in a position to carry out the activities outlined in their terms of reference.

As a result, the programme has to be implemented entirely by the group of experts at the Commission's headquarters.

Owing to inadequate resources it has hitherto not been possible to organize experts meetings or seminars.

Only the building materials and construction industries development programme has been implemented in accordance with the prescribed time table, thanks to the support given to-date by the United Nations Development Programme and contributions from other extra-budgetary resources. However, in view of the limited resources, it has not been possible to second any member of the team of experts assigned to this programme to the subregional offices. Nevertheless, the planned activities were carried out diligently, thanks to the competence and dynamism of the members of the project team. Many governments of member countries have expressed great satisfaction at the way the programme has been executed and are in favour of its continuation.

Since the secretariat has only a limited number of experts for the implementation of the whole programme, it is proposed to reduce the areas of activity. The priorities should therefore be reviewed and the time table for their implementation revised accordingly. Lastly, it is also suggested to use effectively some of the mechanisms originally envisaged for the implementation of the programme.

Priority areas

The priorities of the regional human settlements programme derive, quite naturally, from the general economic, social and regional development objectives, the assigned priority areas of action for the achievement of these objectives and from the existing regional framework.

The new strategy for Africa's development proposes a new type of development and lays down the guiding principles for activities to be carried out with a view to ensuring the economic and social progress of the region during the next two decades.

Self-sustained development implies, for the region, a spatial restructuring of the production activities particularly in the rural areas where about 80 per cent of the population live. The provision of facilities in these areas is one of the prerequisites for this growth. It follows therefore that the regional human settlements programme must endeavour, as a matter of priority, to support the efforts of the governments of member countries in their physical planning policies and programmes.

Another priority area is the development of construction policies geared, particularly, to reducing the cost of building materials, improving the building techniques, standards and regulations and removing other obstacles to the development of construction capacity resulting from the failure to adapt various elements to local conditions. In fact it is vital to develop this capability if the objectives defined in the new strategy are to be achieved. Lastly, individual and collective self-reliance is possible only through the formulation and implementation of a policy and framework for the exchange of information on problems and experiences, and through the full utilization, improvement and development of training facilities at the national, subregional and regional levels.

In short three priority areas are submitted to the Committee for the finalization of the next cycle of activity, namely

- Physical planning;
- Construction policies;
- Information and training.

Within each of these major priority areas the national and regional context will determine the step to be taken and, depending on the progress made, the areas where efforts should be concentrated.

In this way, the multidisciplinary dimension of the sub-sectors will be gradually taken into count. For example, methodological approaches, urbanization and urban problems, land problems, etc... will be dealt with in the framework of physical planning policies and programmes.

In the revised programme of work, the provision of advisory technical services to governments of member countries on request will continue to receive high priority.

Although the regional and subregional programmes continue to be presented separately, activities for their implementation will be undertaken from the Commission's headquarters. This is because the secretariat is not in a position to second experts to the subregional offices for long periods of time. In the event that the sub-regional offices receive requests from member States, these requests will be forwarded to the headquarters which will take the appropriate action.

With regard to the implementation of the priorities, the secretariat will undertake the necessary studies in conformity with the themes defined by the Committee and prepare reports on these studies. These reports will be submitted to the Inter-Governmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and/or individually to the governments of member countries. The secretariat would make proposals concerning the organization of meetings or seminars for approval by the Committee or groups of countries that are willing to bear the cost of organizing these meetings with the help of ECA. It is in this spirit that a proposal is made in document E/ECA/HUS/4 for the setting up of technical study committees.

Lastly, with regard to inter-agency co-operation, the secretariat will endeavour to develop activities to be carried out jointly with agencies, both within and outside the United Nations system, inasmuch as these activities can contribute significantly to the search for solutions to problems facing member States in the field of human settlements.

In view of the serious problem of housing financing inherent in the human settlements policies and programmes co-operation with Shelter-Afrique will be pursued and developed even further.

Sectoral activities carried out within the framework of construction policies concerning, for example, the production of building materials, the study of standards and regulations, the development of national building industries, are factors that greatly influence the ability of countries in the region to benefit from Shelter-Afrique's facilities. These activities can constitute a vital element of assistance from ECA in addition to the technical services that the secretariat can provide to member States on request within the framework of housing construction programmes for which financial support would be sought from Shelter-Afrique. Bilateral assistance will also be an additional factor for the implementation of regional priorities.

Revised programme of work for 1982-1984

The programme of work and priorities for 1982-1984 adopted by the Committee at its second meeting (see document E/CN.14/HUS/45) is divided into two subprogrammes each of which is subdivided into three parts. The two subprogrammes are:

A. Policy development and institution building;
B. Efficient resource development and utilization.

The three parts of each of these two subprogrammes are:

Assistance to governments, regional programme and subregional programme.

Subprogramme A: Policy development and institution building

At the regional level

This subprogramme comprises four elements at the regional level:

(i) Analysis and study of alternative human settlements policies as tools for the organization and spatial planning of economic activities and social development. Human settlements in rural areas and, in particular, problems related to the development of river basins will receive special attention. The future dimensions of these alternative policies will also be reviewed and fed into the studies that will be conducted.

(ii) Continuation of the subprogramme on the development of housing policies and more specifically housing in disadvantaged areas, slums and unauthorized squatter areas etc..

This programme element will comprise:

(a) The development of co-operative and self-help building systems,

(b) The development of financing mechanisms for this category of housing,

(c) In conjunction with (b) above, study of types of standards and regulations which will facilitate the development of financing arrangements.

(iii) Development of the training of building experts and technicians.

(iv) Study of a regional computerized information and documentation system within the framework of the ongoing Pan African Documentation and Information System (PADIS) programme.

At the subregional level

Priority will be accorded to assisting Governments of member States which will request such assistance. The secretariat will endeavour to establish and improve the efficiency of machineries for assistance within the MULPOCs or subregional offices.

In this regard, the secretariat will encourage the establishment of permanent national advisory committees or similar machineries, where these do not yet exist, in the subregions.

Machineries for consultation and for defining subregional priorities will be accorded particular attention on the basis of experiences in the East and West African subregions; substantial assistance will be provided for the formulation of subregional human settlements programmes which will be submitted to the Council of Ministers of each subregion. It is expected that, it will be possible to organize in each subregion, as was done in the West African subregion, meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee on Human Settlements to review subregional priorities and foster subregional and inter-country co-operation.

Under subregional assistance, special effort will be made to provide assistance for implementing inter-country rural development programmes, and particularly, river basin development programmes.

Sub-programme B: Efficient resource development and utilization

The document emphasises that the general objective of this subprogramme is to develop and utilize existing resources efficiently for the implementation of human settlements policies. In this regard, an effort will be made to continue and expand the programme for developing local building techniques and materials with a view to attaining self-sufficiency by the year 2000 as requested by the Conference of African Ministers of Industry.

(i) This programme will focus on the implementation of operational projects applying the results of research into the techniques for producing and utilizing local construction materials in peri-urban and rural low-cost housing schemes.

Regional programme

At the regional level, the emphasis will be on strengthening the systems, services and supportive elements of the building materials and construction industries whose development would contribute to a general reduction in construction costs. These are:

(i) The establishment and strengthening of information and documentation systems and services based on the results of experiments conducted both in Africa and outside (particularly developing regions);

(ii) The various phased actions to be carried out for the reformulation or modification of building codes and regulations as a means of rationalizing construction activities taking into account the actual needs and conditions of the continent;

(iii) The strengthening of African building and building materials research capabilities, particularly through the establishment of an African centre for building and building materials research.

Subregional programme

This will, as far as possible, consist of operations and activities that would promote greater subregional economic integration and encourage the pooling together of natural, financial and human resources. Priority will be accorded to the following areas:

(i) Promotion of the production of building materials using local raw materials and in certain cases, in subregional pilot plants. Materials such as cement, sheet-glass, fine ceramics, iron rods and others may fall within this category of products to be manufactured on a subregional basis;

(ii) Promotion and establishment of subregional building and building materials research centres;

(iii) Development on a subregional basis of building materials standards as a means of reducing the cost of construction and promoting the marketing of locally produced building materials,

(iv) Development of training programmes for African entrepreneurs and skilled workers as a means of rationalizing and strengthening the participation of Africans in large-scale construction projects.

Revised programme of work

The revised programme has two subprogrammes (A and B) and according to the usual pattern of presenting the work programme, every subprogramme is divided into three parts as follows:

(i) Provision of technical services to governments;
(ii) Regional programme;
(iii) Subregional programme.

Revised programme of work and priorities for 1982-1984

Subprogramme A: Policy development and institution building

(i) Provision of technical services to governments of member States.
(ii) Regional programme

(a) Analysis and study of spatial organizational factors of economic activities (structures and machineries for decision making, formulation and implementation, physical planning and urbanization, urban problems, land policies, etc).

(b) Survey of human settlements situation in the African region[1/].

(c) Development of training of building experts and technicians.

(d) Study of a regional computerized documentation and information system (PADIS programme).

(iii) Subregional programme

Survey of human settlements situation in the subregions[1/].

Subprogramme B: Efficient resource development and utilization

(i) Provision of technical services to governments.
(ii) Regional programme.

(a) Building materials and construction techniques development programme (policy for the development of building and building materials research. Preparation for establishment of pilot projects for cement, lime and pozzolana production).

(b) Development of construction policies (Housing financing systems, codes and regulations; development of national construction enterprises).

1/ In conjunction with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).

(iii) Subregional programme

(a) Development of building and building materials research and studies for subregionalization of existing national research centres.

(b) Establishment of pilot projects for cement, lime and pozzolana production.

Conclusion

The revised programme aims at ensuring a rational utilization of the region's resources for the development of human settlement policies.

The objective of the regional activities is thus to assist governments in their individual and collective efforts to define their policies, and formulate and implement programmes in consonance with these policies.

These activities should also enable the Committee to assemble the necessary data for taking decisions on collective actions and measures which will support national policies.